



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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was need to bring this matter to the attention of parents, for in these days they were all liable to be "Mrs. Jellabys," and in training and bringing up other people's children to forget their own. It was necessary, too, that the results of scientific observation and experience in the matter of education should be widely known, because people could not now, as too often had been the habit, throw all the blame on parents, and say that the fault rested entirely with them. But still parents should not shield themselves or think that they were less responsible for their children's training. If the result of discoveries in heredity had the effect of taking away from parents their full sense of responsibility, then they would be losers and not gainers by the knowledge science had given them on the subject. (Hear, hear). Miss Barnett then delivered an interesting lecture on "Training and Inheritance." Having touched on the work of the Union, she discoursed at length on the subject of heredity, her remarks tending to show that children inherited the physical bodies of their parents, but that the intellectual and spiritual life had comparatively little to do with heredity. But the problems which the Union dealt with were those of training and conditions, and they ought to realise what the inheritance was, and balance training against it. The lecturer threw out a number of suggestions upon training, and said that sometimes what was mistaken for heredity was merely imitation, and therefore it was beneficial to a child to be sent away from home for a time before its character was formed. The Rev. A. E. Vinter proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Barnett and the Bishop of Derby, which was seconded by the Rev. C. H. Perez, and cordially passed.

WALLASEY.—On January 29th, Miss E. A. Barnett gave a lecture on "Training and Inheritance," to the members of the branch. The attendance was small, but the lecture was listened to with great interest and appreciation by those present.

GLASGOW.—The first meeting of this branch was held at 4, Windsor Terrace, W., at 4.30 p.m., on January 28th. There was a good attendance. The hostess, Mrs. Henderson, occupied the chair, and introduced the lecturer. Professor Young delivered a most interesting address on "The Cultivation of the Faculty of Observation in Young Children." After showing how later studies are hampered by the want of early training in habits of observation, he went on to point out that powers of observation must be directed. A child must be taught what to observe and how to observe it. There is a great difference between intelligent, reasoned observation, and mechanical repetition. Observant habits promote personal sympathy. The unobservant are often thoughtlessly cruel. Learning by rote is to be deprecated. Games and tasks calling for rapid and accurate observation should be recommended. The use of a revolving board is a step in the right direction. An eye for form can be cultivated. The use of the eyes is one of the most important lessons of life. The address, which was lit up by frequent flashes of humour, and illustrated by examples drawn from the lecturer's personal experience, was listened to with close attention.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

ON THE VALUE OF AUTHORITY IN MORAL EDUCATION.

BY CHARLES D. OLIVE, M.A., OXON.

ONLY a little while ago it was taken as a matter of course by all of us parents that the exercise of Authority in educating our children was necessary and right. Most of us, I think, believe so still. But in the course of the last few years, among the many parents who have begun to think and speak and act more earnestly and thoughtfully in the matter of educating their children than parents for the most part thought and spoke and acted twenty years ago, some few have outstripped their fellows—if not in actual earnestness and thoughtfulness—at least in the rapidity and multiplicity of changes proposed. And so it has come to pass that in more than one educational debate motions have been recently brought forward to the following effect:—"That the Appeal to Authority is an Obstacle to Moral Education," and, "That Moral Education should be based not on Authority but on Reason."

These views appear to me fascinating, I admit, but erroneous and likely to be harmful. And that they undoubtedly find favour with a considerable number of parents is the only excuse that I will offer for sitting down to seriously combat them, and committing to paper what will seem to many who read these words but a series of truisms.

And first of all what do we mean by Authority? I mean force, mental or bodily, generally both combined, exercised lawfully by the stronger over the weaker for the benefit of both. If this definition be accepted it will, I think, help to smooth away some of the difficulties and differences between those who hold with me the more old-fashioned views of Education and those who hold the new. For it has appeared to me in those debates on this subject at which I have been present, that the new educationists assume—I think quite unwarrantably—that the exercise of Authority, if acknowledged to be such, must of necessity be spasmodic and capricious, or even tyrannical. It appears to me from their own admissions—such as for example: “I always make my children *obey* me”—that they themselves exercise Authority over their own children; but exercising it undoubtedly in the best possible way—that is only when and as it ought to be exercised—they deny it its proper name; and in so doing they are likely, I fear, to do much harm to the cause of true Education, if their precepts rather than their examples are followed, as they certainly will be, by parents with less personality and less power for good than they themselves possess.

Yet this is not all. I have been told that “the difference between us is eternal and that cannot be bridged.” For we old-world folk, it is alleged, aim at putting in our knowledge, while the new educationists aim at drawing out from the child’s mind what is there already. Now this seems to me confusing the point at issue.

Some of us who happen to be schoolmasters may perhaps have been sometimes guilty (with the connivance of parents) of cramming boys with a view to some particular examination for bread-and-butter purposes. But none of us believe that such cramming is true Education. We should all agree, I hope, that true Education consists in training the child’s mind, developing the faculties possessed, paving the way for real knowledge, most valuable always when self-acquired. We shall differ no doubt as to the amount of mental food that may be necessary, allowable, or harmful to a child’s brain at certain stages. For the child’s brain will not develop without food—mental as well as bodily. That its mental food is most digestible and most productive of true

growth when self-gathered is granted. It is granted, that is, that true Education should be not from without but from within. But that does not take away the necessity for Authority. We must and will exert Authority to keep the growth straight and true, as we put supports around young trees that they may not be blown away by every wind. By-and-by when they have thrust down their roots into the earth and put up to heaven their branches, we remove the ties and the trees stand firm and straight. So, too, as the child grows bigger we relax and in the end remove entirely our Authority.

One point more before passing on. The method of “drawing out” as opposed to “putting in” has no right to be called new. It is at least as old as Socrates, who called it his maieutic method.

Do you remember how Junius began his first letter “To the Printer of the Public Advertiser?” “The submission of a free people to the executive authority of government is no more than a compliance with laws which they themselves have enacted. While the national honour is firmly maintained abroad, and while justice is impartially administered at home, the obedience of the subject will be voluntary, cheerful, and I might almost say, unlimited.”

It is quite true; we are hemmed in and protected by Authority on every side from the cradle to the grave. Let us be thankful for it. And why should Authority be excluded only from the realm of Education? Why should children, at the most impressionable period of their little lives, be denied this support? In a debate on the former of the two motions quoted on the first page of this paper the opposer said: “Education without Authority would be Educational Anarchy.” To which in the final reply the mover rejoined (I quote from memory and cannot answer for the exact words): “Well, what of that? If there were no laws against stealing would you or I or anyone in this room steal?” This remark, though uttered in the warmth of a debate, verges, I consider, on very dangerous doctrine. That the mover, if all restrictions were removed, would neither steal nor do anything else dishonest or dishonourable I feel absolutely certain. That I myself should not, nor those most nearly knit to me, I most profoundly hope. But of all

the rest of the world—even the gentle world that pants for what is good and true—I confess I do not feel so sure. We are not within a measurable distance of the millennium yet.

From my own observation as a parent, I know that a child can (sometimes) recognise and respond to the voice accompanying the hand that feeds it, at the age of two weeks. At about the same time it becomes amenable to discipline—that is, to Authority. (The nurse will call it training, which is perhaps an easier word). It will cry when it is hungry, and it will cry when it is not hungry with a cry so similar that no one but the veriest expert can detect the difference. Will you feed it when it is not hungry to quiet it? Sowing the wind that you may reap the whirlwind? Will you carry it about to sooth it and establish a rule of regular promenades, that the baby will insist henceforth on your religiously observing? Or will you rather—I do not say harden your heart—but steel it in old Roman fashion to endure for once or twice the little one's healthy and harmless cry, that you may teach it the habit, taught so easily *at first* but not afterwards, of going to sleep properly at the proper time and in the proper place?—a habit so much better and more healthy for the baby, so much more restful for the parent and the nurse.

I assume, as a matter of course, that all you mothers who read this magazine adopt the latter reasonable course; and, in your own persons or by the hand of your well-trained nurses, exercise healthy Authority from the outset over your infants. For it is nothing more nor less than the exercise of Authority, though not inconsistent (as I have heard it implied) with love and tenderness of the highest degree. Now, if you do this, why cease to exercise Authority so soon as the child has ceased to be an infant? I use the word infant in its original meaning of a creature without power of speech. The birth of speech is accompanied by the dawn of reason, but the growth of the two is not simultaneous. Speech is at first purely imitative, and the power of speaking develops with infinitely greater rapidity than the power of reasoning. I have seen a baby-boy of two years old go up alone to the bookstall at a railway station and buy himself a copy of *Woman*—a periodical in brown paper covers—since defunct,

I believe. And when his father asked: "Why did you not buy pictures?" the answer came gravely and glibly, "Because I must have a book with blue pages in Latin to tell the time by." Could you reason with a child who talked like that? I could not, nor for several years to come.

From my own experience I know that a child may begin to talk at ten months old; to set will against will in words, which is not to reason, before two years. Free-will is a wonderful gift, one of the most divine of all those with which we have been blessed. But will you let your child use it before it has strength of brain sufficiently developed to use it aright? Will you let free-will become self-will? You do not make it use its little legs at once, unless indeed you are most foolish and short-sighted. You let it crawl about and roll upon the floor (I hope) regardless of soiled pinafores and grimy knees, till the child feels its own strength grow, and after some few failures one day pulls itself up by a chair, and to its own wonderment and your delight stands for the first time alone erect. You know the penalty for infringing Nature's law and forcing the child to walk too soon? Weak legs, bowed knees, and the possibility of hideous irons to make them straight again. Arguments by analogy are apt to be fallacious; but here, I think, from the body to the brain we shall not go wrong. If it is injurious to forestall the proper period for using bodily powers, how much more injurious to prematurely exercise the brain? And I believe few things worry a child so much as having to choose. To have to choose between two presents is bad enough, to choose between two treats worse; but to leave it free to choose between two courses of action, one of which you point out to it is wrong, seems to me not only unnecessary but downright cruel. Do you know the look of a worried child? The puckered little brow, the quivering of the little eyelids, and the drooping lips? If you value the health and strength of your child's brain and body, do not worry it while it is young.

It is so restful to have someone on whom we may lean; someone on whose judgment we may implicitly rely. Most of us who are grown up know—or have known—the feeling. I have heard that the great Roman Catholic Church, with its annually increasing army of proselytes, owes a large number

of its converts to this hunger for rest—rest in the strong arms of Authority. Children have this feeling more intensely than adults, though they cannot put it into words. Let them rest while it is possible and lawful. The child will naturally trust implicitly to its parents, if the parents encourage it to do so. Why should we not? What is more beautiful than a child's faith in its parents? What better for us parents than to feel and know the faith and trust placed in us by our children? We may not always feel quite worthy of it; but if we are not worthy we can try to make ourselves so. We may make their faith in us, as it were, stepping-stones towards the attainment of our own ideals.

It is sometimes said, that a want of reverence is characteristic of this age. It is always difficult to compare our own age with ages that are past; from our own personal experience we know little enough of the one, and nothing at all of the others. But if this accusation be true, and if we have less reverence than our forefathers, we may surely look for the reason here—in the new attitude that already exists very widely of parents towards their children, and of children towards their parents.

It is, I believe, impossible to say for certain either at what age the moral sense—that is the power and will to distinguish right from wrong—begins to show itself, or at what age it is completely developed. Children vary so widely in this respect. Some few seem born with the moral sense already awakened. In most children it can be and is aroused some time between the ages of two and seven. I have known an unhappy few who, so far as could be judged, passed through their childhood and early boyhood without exhibiting a vestige of it. Such instances are fortunately rare. I believe that the moral sense is seldom, if ever, fully developed in a boy till he is past fourteen. In a girl undoubtedly the development of this, as of everything else, is earlier. In many boys it comes later still. And until this power to know the right has been developed, either by spontaneous inward growth, or by careful training, or by inward growth fostered by careful training—until this power to know the right has been developed, and the will to choose the right has become a habit, you cannot be sure of any child that, when alternatives are presented to it, it will know how to choose the right and be strong enough

to reject the wrong. And between babyhood and adolescence the occasions will be many when such alternatives present themselves to our children. Shall we be content to say: "This is the right course and that the wrong, choose for yourself"? Often and often they will not know, they will not realize what follows from not choosing right. We ourselves know—some of us too well—how difficult it is, even when we are grown up and are our own masters, to profit by experience that we have not bought ourselves. Our children are the heirs of all the ages; our experience is a part of their inheritance: how dare we suffer them to barter it away? You new educationists, if you have set before your children the right course and the wrong, and the reasons why one is right and not the other, and if they still are unconvinced and will not follow the right, will you calmly sit down and let them go wrong, waiting for the retribution that you know will surely follow to teach its own sad lesson? Or will you confess to yourselves that you are defeated and fall back after all upon Authority and make them do the right? You had better have done it at first. Not till after many days will you recover the effects of the defeat. Yet I cannot really suppose that any of you would shrink on principle from exercising Authority in any really serious moral case. What surprises and alarms me for the future is, that you seem to believe that with your methods from the beginning there will be no more serious moral flaws or failures. If I could believe so too, I should be a new educationist myself. But it is in other matters, in things naturally indifferent or immaterial, that the question of Authority or no Authority will most frequently arise; with reference to actions or courses not wrong in themselves, but not expedient for the child. It is in this connection that we most frequently hear used the phrase that seems to me the most ill-judged, unwise of phrases to address to a young child: "Don't you think you had better do so-and-so?" More often than not the child does not think that he had better adopt your view, especially if he has already set his heart on the other course. And it is infinitely kinder to him and more productive of happiness—of real good—to tell him the proper course that he is to follow, to let him know that *that* is the way and that he *is* to walk in it.

But, someone will say, if you always choose for the child, the child will acquire no will-power of its own. Oh, yes it will. As it passes from childhood to adolescence, there will be plenty of occasions when neither you nor anyone else with authority are by, when the child will have to choose—and will choose—for itself. But every time that you are present to help, and do help, and make the child know and choose the right, you lead it some distance on the way towards the formation of a good habit. For habits are nothing more than the results, stereotyped so to speak, of a succession of similar actions. And there are and always will be countless opportunities offered to us by "Nature, the grand old Nurse," for teaching the child to use its brains quite as much as is good for it, and to make inductions for itself, without trying dangerous experiments in the domain of morals. For with reference to the child, all these naturally indifferent actions are questions of morality.

But, I have been told, "every child whose brain has not been warped already by bad training will choose aright. Every child is made in the image of God and loves to do right, and longs to do right, and will do right if only you will let it. It is your old educators with your harsh unsympathetic Authority who, trying to put your knowledge in instead of bringing out the child's, have marred its intelligence and rendered it incapable of choosing right." Here again is the old assumption, quite without warrant, that none but new educationists escape being harsh and unsympathetic. Some of us are quite content to be old-fashioned with the gentle Roger Ascham, or to go back another sixteen hundred years with the Apostle, who while preaching implicit obedience to those in authority bids us "bear rule with gentleness."

That *all* children naturally love to do right and long to do right—if only we will let them—does not agree with my experience. Most children, I believe, do love right better than wrong naturally, and all, I believe, with very few exceptions, can be trained to do so, if taken in hand early. But that given the power of exercising their free-will they always follow the right, even when they have learned to love right best, is not in accordance with facts. Why is this? I believe that it arises from the duality of our nature.

"There is a great Good Will; and there is a great Evil

Will; and we are in the middle with our Free Will,"* may not be a scientific definition of undisputed facts; but it is a good working description of the ground on which most ordinary men and women—and all children—seem to stand. "I find my growing judgment daily instruct me how to be better, but my untamed affections and confirmed vitiosity makes me daily do worse,"† wrote the good doctor in his "Religio Medici." Was he really a sinner above all men, or a conscious hypocrite? I believe neither.

"The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do,"‡ pictures a not uncommon frame of mind (or body?) in adults even, much more in children.

I have been upbraided by a new educationist (whom I have not previously quoted) for these last remarks as savouring of "an antiquated philosophy in which no one now believes: the German philosophers have disproved all that." We cannot all be philosophers, but some of us are content to be antiquated—with the Bishop of Lincoln, Sir Thomas Browne, and St. Paul.

It is true that I have been told by some who do not call themselves new educationists, that they do not understand this state of mind at all. That for them the fable of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has no meaning, for they are unconscious of any tendency in themselves, save towards what is right. I envy such. Sometimes, when I am low-spirited, I feel unfit to associate with them. At other times, as I contemplate them happy on their pinnacle, I remember the story of the Chinese Emperor and his new clothes, invisible to all who had any consciousness of evil; and I feel a ripple of silent laughter stealing down my sleeve.

In arguing for Authority as the basis of moral training rather than reason, of course I do not wish to exclude or in any way undervalue reason. Tell a child by all means why you order a particular course of action and forbid the contrary, but let his obedience to your wish come first, and be quite independent of his intellectual assent to your reasoning. Apart from the harm which I believe it does to a

* Canon King (now Bishop of Lincoln): University Sermon at Oxford, between 1870—1874.

† "Religio Medici," page 62, Dent's "Temple" Edition.

‡ Epistle to the Romans, vii. 19.

child's character to let him refuse obedience if he sees no reason for it, to allow this course is absolutely dangerous. Occasions must occur from time to time when orders will be given, while it is impossible or unwise at the time to unfold reasons.

Suppose a parent in the habit of not exacting obedience without rendering a reason, suddenly tells his son not to enter a certain house to which he is in the habit of going; but either from press of work or from fear of alarming some nervous person present, or from sheer forgetfulness, omits to say that there is dangerous illness there. The boy not unnaturally says to himself: "I don't see why not," and goes to the house, in spite of the prohibition, with disastrous results. I have known whooping cough spread through a large household in this way.

One of my own boys sometimes comes in when I am engaged in conversation with a friend, or perhaps with a stranger on business, to ask, "Father, may I do so-and-so?" A quiet, but peremptory "No" is quite sufficient, if I disapprove. The boy goes off, a little disappointed perhaps, but quite acquiescent. Should I stop my conversation and waste a grown man's time, that may be to him I do not know how valuable, to give my own child reasons for denying his request, when I am sure that the denial is for his good and the delay in telling him my reason (which he will probably forget to ask) quite harmless?

I have said that the exercise of Authority is not inconsistent with love and tenderness from the parent to the child. Perhaps as I have confessedly started on a course of truisms, I should also say—though it seems ridiculous to do so—that submission to Authority is not inconsistent with the greatest love and affection from the child to the parent. If I had not in my own experience found this to be true I should become at once—I dare not say a new educationist—but a forswearer for ever of Authority, taking all the risks. I could not do without the love.

I said once in the course of a debate on this subject, that as a schoolmaster I have found the hardest boys to manage not those who have been spoiled, but those who have been harshly treated at home. The new educationists triumphed over this as an admission damaging to my own case. I do

not think it is a damaging admission. The very use of the word "harshly" implies that the Authority at home has been exercised not always when and how it should have been. And, moreover, the spoiled children, if they do give less anxiety than the harshly treated, have generally to travel back by painful roads before they regain the middle way. Because the evil effects of eating or drinking too much are more quickly and visibly manifest than the evil effects of eating and drinking too little, we do not therefore keep our children without food and drink. Because bodily exertion too violent or too prolonged works greater and speedier havoc on a child's body than complete inactivity, we do not therefore forbid our children to take any exercise at all. So, too, because the evils of excessive or ill-directed Authority may be sometimes more glaring than those which arise from using none at all, we must not therefore let our children go free from Authority altogether, any more than keep them altogether without exercise or food.

My observations upon children brought up throughout without Authority have naturally been somewhat limited, but from what I have seen I am certainly disposed to regard them as rather disagreeable little people, setting an inordinate value on their own judgment and no value at all on the judgment of anyone else; while in any disputed point if a verdict be given against them they are inclined to cry out that justice no longer exists. Nor have I observed, so far as I have been able to observe at all, that they eventually make better or more amiable men and women.

To conclude: It is not good for anyone to have his own way always—not even when he is grown up—much less is it good for children. Very few *can* have their own way always; and those who do are not by any means the happier for it. If you never make your child subordinate his will to another's, unless he sees and understands the ultimate advantage to himself of doing so, you are surely teaching him a very selfish lesson. Few of us go through life without having at some time or other to give up a good deal more than we like. If our children are never taught to give up when young, are we fitting them properly for the battle of life? If we let them think their judgment of equal value with the judgment of those who are older, and who ought to be (if they are not) far

wiser than children, shall we be giving them real self-knowledge? or any other virtue? Shall we not rather run the risk of giving them conceit for self-respect, blindness for knowledge, obstinacy for self-control? forgetting that:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear:
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

[The Editor feels it well to correct any possible misapprehension by stating that the members of the Parents' National Educational Union decline the title of "New Educationists," and believe that Authority should play a very definite part in the bringing up of children.]

SENSATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

BY E. HUGHES-GIBB.

THE recollection of my early childhood and its sensations is, with me, remarkably clear and vivid; more so, I suspect, than is very commonly the case; and I have a sympathy and tenderness for that period of my life which makes it almost a sacred thing to me, not to be approached without a kind of wistful reverence and love.

One very great difficulty which besets the writer who would recall the sensations of very early childhood is the want of a language in which to convey them! No words, I think, can rightly express the peculiar glamour with which a little child invests every object of its daily life. Perhaps it is most akin to the love-glamour of youth! We all remember the sensations of that period of our lives, even though it be long passed, with its joys and its pains, and we see things now in calm, true, peaceful light of afternoon! The little child is in love with life and with the beautiful world in which it finds itself. A charm is over everything! a charm without a why! The most unpromising thing may be invested with this charm, which no one but the child can discover, and may be a treasure untold, fascinating beyond description.

After all, why should not a lump of gum from a cherry tree be as precious as a beautiful specimen of amber? I remember well the charm of the former; it was delightful to touch, to handle, to play with. Why? there was no why! it was so.

I wish I could make an egg for breakfast look to me as it looked then! Enticing, delicious, perfectly adorable in its smooth roundness. It is not the taste I am speaking of, though that, too, was a sensation only to be experienced in childhood; but the whole *conception* of an egg as it was presented to my childish mind is one not to be expressed in words—a thing as intangible and indescribable as an odour!